Pakistan's support for Iran in UN 'very encouraging'

• Cultural centre chief in Quetta expresses his gratitude to Islamabad • Accuses Western media of 'baseless propaganda'; warns of Israel's broader 'designs'

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: The director general of the Khana-i-Farhang (cultural centre) Iran in Quetta, Syed Abul Hasan Miri, on Friday termed Pakistan's "strong support" at the United Nations in the prevailing situation — wherein Tehran is seeking to deter repeated threats from the US to intervene on behalf of anti-government protesters — as "very encouraging".

"We are grateful to Pakistan for extending its strong support to Iran in this situation," he said during an informal talk at the Quetta Press Club.

Mr Miri said Pakistan was playing an important role in helping ease tensions in Iran.

He alleged that sections of the Western media were responsible for aggravating the situation through what he termed "negative propaganda". He urged the Pakistani media not to rely on or follow such reports.

He denied claims of the killing of 20,000 people during riots in Iran, terming them "baseless propaganda" by the Western media.

"A few traders started protests against the policy of the Iranian government, which Israel and the US described as being anti-state," he maintained.

However, he added that with foreign intervention, terrorists burned mosques and copies of the Holy Quran. "More than 100 ambulances and 1,400 ATMs were burned, while 365 shopping malls were looted by the terrorists in two days of riots in different cities."

Mr Miri said that around 265 educational institutions and assets belonging to municipal committees, worth $20 million, were set ablaze.

"The 26 million people of Iran have foiled the conspiracy of Israel and the United States by coming out of their homes [and staging pro-government rallies]," he said.

'Israel's designs'

He warned that Israel's designs were not limited to Iran. "It is dreaming of controlling the entire Middle East and, after Iran, wants to reach Turkiye, Afghanistan and Pakistan, but it will never succeed."

The Iranian diplomat said the situation in Iran had become normal after the people foiled the evil designs of the country's enemies.

He further alleged that Israel and the US were backing anti-Iran terrorist elements and had attempted to influence some youth through social media as part of a coordinated campaign.

Mr Miri said recent tensions were fuelled by the misrepresentation of Iran's new economic policy announced on Dec 28.

Under the policy, he explained, the Iranian government withdrew subsidies amounting to $18 billion from five specific companies. He added that a small group of traders began protests against the policy, which, he claimed, were portrayed by the western media, Israel and the US as anti-state demonstrations.

The diplomat said the temporary suspension of internet services helped curb acts of sabotage and that conditions in Iran had now returned to normal.

At the UN Security Council, Pakistan said it hoped for an early normalisation of the situation in Iran, warning that the UN Charter and international law prohibit external interference in the internal affairs of states.

"The UN Charter prohibits the threat or use of force against other states' territorial integrity or political independence, or interference in matters essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of states," Ambassador Asim Ahmad, Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN, told an emergency meeting of the 15-member Council on Thursday evening.

NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq hands over the notification of Mehmood Khan Achakzai's appointment as leader of the opposition to PTI leaders.—APP

Achakzai finally named opposition leader in NA

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however, it was not due to some issues". "Today, it has finally been issued," he added.

"Although it was our right, we received it today after a long delay," he continued.

Congratulations pour in

Former NA opposition leader Omar Ayub congratulated Mr Achakzai on the appointment, voicing optimism that he would "fulfil his responsibilities brilliantly".

"Heartiest congratulations to Achakzai *sahib*, who has been officially declared as the 'Leader of the Opposition National Assembly'," Mr Ayub wrote in a post on X. "It is a great singular honour, and Ackhakzai *sahib* will, InshaAllah, fulfil his responsibilities brilliantly."

PTI MNA Ali Muhammad Khan also congratulated Mr Achakzai.

"Congratulations on becoming the opposition leader. It's a great honour and responsibility given to him by our leader," he wrote on X.

Mr Khan also expressed hope that Mr Achakzai, in his position, "will do his best" to ensure the release of the PTI founder and "other innocent political prisoners, including our vice chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi".

He further hoped that Mr Achakzai would bring "derailed democracy back on track".

PTI's struggle

On Jan 13, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar confirmed the party's submission of Mr Achakzai's nomination papers to the NA speaker.

It was the second time the party had formally proposed his name for the post of opposition leader in the lower house of parliament.

On Jan 6, NA Speaker Sadiq had said that the process for the appointment of the opposition leader was to be initiated afresh.

The opposition had also submitted nomination papers for Mr Achakzai to the speaker's office in October last year.

Rule 39 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, 2007, confirms it is the sole prerogative of the speaker to ask the opposition at any time to submit a name, after which the opposition may present it.

However, the submission in October was made to the speaker's office rather than to him personally.

The opposition has also repeatedly accused the government of delaying Mr Achakzai's appointment, while the NA speaker had until recently maintained that the matter was "sub judice" — apparently a reference to Mr Ayub's appeal against his disqualification.

Mr Ayub had filed pleas in the Supreme Court and high courts against his removal but later withdrew them.

Subsequently, the NA Secretariat sent a letter to PTI Chief Whip Dogar in December, seeking details about the status of cases concerning Mr Ayub.

The letter said the provision of the details in writing was necessary for the completion of the process for the appointment of the opposition leader in the NA.

Mr Dogar submitted the required documents to the NA speaker on Jan 5, following which the latter said that the constitutional process for appointing the next opposition leader would be initiated afresh in the next parliamentary session.

During the Jan 6 NA session, the speaker formally initiated the process for the appointment of the opposition leader by seeking proposals for the nomination.

FC's role in Balochistan peace lauded

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti visited the headquarters of Frontier Corps Balochistan (North) on Friday and appreciated its valuable role in establishing peace in the province.

On the occasion, a contingent of the FC Balochistan (North) presented a salute to Mr Naqvi and Mr Bugti.

The inspector general of the FC Balochistan (North), Major Gen Muhammad Atif Mujtaba, introduced the senior officers to the interior minister and CM Bugti.

They also visited the martyrs' memorial, laid a wreath and offered Fateha.

The IG FC Balochistan (North) briefed them on the force's training, operational preparedness, and professional capabilities.

Mr Naqvi said that the sacrifices of FC Balochistan (North) in the war against terrorism were unforgettable, describing their services for establishing peace as a "bright chapter in history".

75 feeders in Quetta exempted from power cuts

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA: The Quetta Electric Supply Company (Qesco) has taken several measures to ensure improved electricity supply to people across Balochistan.

As part of the initiative, Qesco has declared 75 out of 139 feeders in Quetta city as loadshedding-free as all feeders connected to the 132kV Quetta City Grid Station and 132kV Mari Abad Grid Station have been exempted from power outages.

Loadshedding of four to six hours daily is being carried out on the remaining 64 feeders in different areas of Quetta at various times. In the Makran region, 34 out of 70 feeders have been declared loadshedding-free. The remaining 36 feeders in Makran are being provided electricity for 16 to 18 hours daily.

Robber killed in shootout

QUETTA: One robber was killed and a police officer sustained injuries during an exchange of fire between police and armed suspects in the provincial capital, officials said on Friday.

According to SSP Dostain Dashti, the incident occurred near Sana Pump in the Shalkot area, where police encountered armed robbers. During the shootout, one robber was killed, while his two accomplices managed to escape.—Staff Correspondent

Arrest, detention of Afghans increase 18pc in Jan: UN-IOM

Report says 130,999 Afghans arrested, detained from Sept 15 to Jan 10

By Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: The arrest and detention of Afghan nationals have increased by 18 per cent so far in January as compared to the previous week. The top three districts for arrest and detention between Jan 1 and 10 were Chaghi, Pishin and Islamabad Capital Territory.

The latest 'Flash Update' jointly released by UN refugee agency, UNHCR, and UN Migration office, IOM, says from January 4 to 10, 73 per cent of the total reported arrests and detentions took place in Balochistan and 16 per cent in Islamabad Capital Territory.

Of all arrests and detentions of Afghan nationals during the period, Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders and undocumented Afghans represented 87 per cent of the total arrest and detentions while Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders represented 13 per cent.

The data released by UNHCR and IOM shows that a total of 130,999 Afghan nationals were arrested and detained from September 15 to January 10, 2026. Most arrests took place in Balochistan with 68 per cent arrests, followed by Islamabad (19pc), Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (6pc), Punjab (4 per cent) and Sindh (3 per cent). Data on the number of arrests by provinces shows the highest number of arrests were made in Balochistan (1489) followed by Islamabad (423), Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (127), Punjab (86), and Sindh (75).

In 2025, the government issued several directives impacting Afghan nationals, and in January 2025, it announced that Afghan nationals should relocate from Islamabad Capital Territory and Rawalpindi, or face deportation.

In April, further announcements indicated the implementation of the second phase of the "Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan", targeting ACC holders, in addition to undocumented Afghans.

In July, the government issued a Statutory Regulation Order (SRO) directing the repatriation/deportation of PoR card holders following the expiry of PoR card validity on June 30.

The government later issued a deadline of September 1 for PoR holders to leave Pakistan, before the start of the repatriation and deportation process.

A report of IOM on 'Returnee Inflow from Pakistan' says returnee inflows decreased from Pakistan by 17pc from December 21 to January 3, averaging 2683 individuals per day.

Despite the overall decrease in returnees from Pakistan, Afghans' return through the Torkham border crossing point increased by 8pc compared to the last reporting period.

A situation analysis by International Federation of Red Crescent (IFRC) says since the beginning of 2025 until the end of November, Afghanistan has witnessed the return of over 5.2 million refugees (deportees and returnees) from Iran and Pakistan, an unprecedented movement, that has further strained a country already grappling with a severe humanitarian crisis.

More than 3.6 million Afghans have returned from Iran alone, of which 1.2 million were deported. The bulk of returns began after April 1, highlighting the intensity of recent developments in both host countries.

According to Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) data, the highest daily influx was recorded in November 2025. Most Afghan returnees cross through the official crossing points of Torkham (Nangarhar) and Spin Boldak (Kandahar), with smaller flows observed at Angur Ada (Paktika) and via unofficial routes in Helmand.

Balochistan plans business facilitation centre

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA: The Balochistan government has taken another significant step under its Digitisation Programme with the establishment of a Business Facilitation Centre (BFC).

The soft launch ceremony of the BFC will be held on Jan 21 at the Sikandar Jamali Auditorium, Civil Secretariat, Quetta. The centre will provide a one-window facility for first-time businesspersons, investors and industrialists, enabling them to start and expand their businesses with ease. The centre will offer all necessary permits, registrations, licences and related documentation from relevant government departments under one roof.

Officials said the initiative aimed to eliminate bureaucratic hurdles and significantly reduce delays and complexities faced by investors. The entire system has been made fully digital, allowing real-time tracking of applications and files. This mechanism is expected to ensure greater transparency, efficiency and accountability, thereby enhancing investor confidence in government processes.

159 lawmakers suspended

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resignation from the National Assembly in September 2024, also appears on the list.

Federal Minister for Climate Change Musadik Malik, PML-N leader and former minister Abid Sher Ali, former federal minister and PTI leader Murad Saeed, and a former federal minister for religious affairs and interfaith harmony are among the nine senators whose memberships have also been suspended by the ECP.

From the Sindh Assembly, Minister Saeed Ghani, Jamaat-i-Islami chief Hafiz Naeemur Rehman and ex-CM Qaim Ali Shah are among those suspended.

The submission of annual statements of assets is a mandatory requirement under Section 137 of the Elections Act, 2017. Section 137(1) of the Elections Act, 2017 stipulates "every member of an assembly and the Senate shall submit to the Commission, on or before December 31 each year, a copy of his statement of assets and liabilities, including assets and liabilities of his spouse and dependent children, as on the preceding thirtieth day of June on Form B".

Last year, the ECP suspended the membership of 139 lawmakers for failing to submit their annual statements of assets.

Notice for Back-Up Long-Term Bidding of Coal Suppliers

Huaneng Shandong Ruyi (Pakistan) Energy (Private) Limited (HSR), operating a 2 x 660 MW coal-fired power station located in Chak No. 76/5-R, Qadirabad, Sahiwal, Sahiwal City, Punjab, Pakistan, invites applications from reputable coal traders with proven experience in importing coal via sea shipments. Interested applicants must not be listed on the FBR blacklist. Allcoal payments will be made in Pakistani Rupees.

The Long-Term Bidding document containing detailed conditions, submission procedures, evaluation criteria, and other relevant information, is available for interested bidders. To obtain the Long-Term Bidding document, please send an email expressing your interest to hnpc_fsd@chnpc.net. A non-refundable fee of PKR **50,000** will be charged for the bidding documents.

The deadline for submission of applications is **15:00 hours on 26th January 2026.**

Person to contact Tel: +92 3168224671.

12 terrorists killed in Kharan

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at a press conference in Quetta on Friday evening, said three Frontier Corps officers, including Col Wardan, Major Asim and Subedar Mohammad Ali, were injured during the clashes.

He said reports indicated 14 terrorists had been killed, but "12 are confirmed", adding that some suspects had escaped and an operation was continuing in the area.

He said that forces had killed four terrorists near the Kharan town, while eight others were killed in an operation conducted on the information of intelligence agencies.

The chief minister said militant groups appeared to have abandoned ideology and descended into criminality.

He added that security forces had killed around 900 hardcore terrorists in operations during 2025, which had led to a reduction in terrorist attacks across Balochistan. He expressed hope that violence would decline further in the coming year, driven by sustained government planning and security efforts.

Mr Bugti said Baloch youth were being targeted through propaganda, but the people of Kharan had rejected the militants and effectively cut off their "social support base".

He stressed that the state remained open to militants willing to surrender. "For 30 years, their actions were portrayed as a struggle for rights," he remarked.

Referring to development work, the chief minister said the Bolan National Highway was being closed at night because of ongoing construction. He also announced that Rs3 billion would be spent to provide fibre-optic internet to all government schools, colleges, universities and hospitals across Balochistan.

He added that appointments in the province were being made strictly on merit and that an online testing system was being introduced to ensure transparency.

Meanwhile, despite high militant casualties, violence surged in 2025, with terror attacks rising 34 per cent and terrorism-related fatalities up 21pc year on year, according to a report by the Islamabad-based Pak Institute for Peace Studies.

Earlier this month, ISPR Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said law enforcement agencies conducted 75,175 intelligence-based operations in 2025, including 58,778 in Balochistan and 14,658 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said 5,397 terror incidents were reported nationwide during the year, with 1,557 in Balochistan and 3,811 in KP.

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Website: www.nicvd.org

Ref: NICVD/TN/Khi/No.12/25-26

TENDER NOTICE FOR NICVD KARACHI

Tender No. 34/2025

Online Tenders through EPAD SPPRA addressed to Executive Director, NICVD, Karachi are invited under SPPRA rules, 2010 (Amended 2019) from well reputed & experienced Firms/Contractors, must be registered with Sales Tax Department on FOR basis for the following supply items for the financial year **2025-2026 & 2026-2027.**

S. No.	Description	Tender No.	Quantity & Specifications are available in Tender Documents	Last Date & Time of Submission & purchasing of Bids	Opening Date & Time of Technical Bids
01.	**Running of Canteen/ Cafeteria & Tuck Shops on rental basis**	**34-2025**		03-02-2026 Tuesday at 11:00 a.m.	03-02-2026 Tuesday at 11:30 a.m.

Bidding documents should be downloaded from EPADs (SPPRA) & should submit pay order/cash of **Rs. 3000/-** for each tender in the name of Executive Director, NICVD, Karachi for each tender from **17-01-2026 (Saturday).**

Bids should be submitted in EPAD SPPRA Software before above submission details. Bids will be opened online on the above mentioned date and time in the presence of Tender Opening Committee and bidders at **11:30 a.m.,** sharp.

All tenders will be accepted along with a **pay order / bank draft of 2%** estimated annual base rent in the name of Executive Director, NICVD, Karachi as bid security in Procurement department before submission of bid.

Note: Single Stage one envelope procedure will be followed.

Note:
1.Evaluation criteria would be strictly followed.
2.This advertisement is also available on EPADS & NICVD websites.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR